

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An apparatus and method for making uniformly shaped snack food chips which can be stacked for packaging, e.g., in a cylindrical canister or a canister which conforms to the contour or perimeter of the snack food chips. The apparatus features two-part mold cavities in which chip preforms are restrained and transported through hot oil to be cooked. Preferably, the mold cavities are defined between a pair of rotating belts, one lower belt and one upper belt, which together "encase" or "sandwich" and thereby restrain the chips. According to the method, a continuous sheet of dough is toasted and then proofed before being cut into individual chip preforms. The preforms are then placed into the mold cavities and transported through hot oil to be cooked. Vacuum transfer rollers are used to facilitate placement of the chip preforms into the mold cavities and extraction of the cooked chips from the mold cavities.